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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEPADJ/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 002319

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/27/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: PRE-EMPTING POLITICAL VIOLENCE; ETHIOPIA ORDERS
RIOT CONTROL EQUIPMENT

REF: 2005 STATE 172529

Classified By: Information Officer Michael Gonzales for reasons 1.4 (B)
and (D).

¶1. (C) A close media contact on September 24 showed Information Officer a recently released tender from the Ethiopian Federal Police inviting bids to provide riot control equipment. Among the list of specific equipment required was:

8,500 riot control batons,
8,500 riot force helmets,
protective police clothing,
17,000 rubber bullets,
27,000 each of two types of other non-lethal bullets,
tear gas canisters, and
hand cuffs.

InfoOff was not given a copy of the actual tender, which included a variety of other non-lethal riot control equipment and supplies. The contact showing the tender speculated that the entire list likely could be supplied for under USD \$2-3 million. The tender requested bid by the end of September.

¶2. (C) COMMENT: News of the federal police's intended purchase bodes good and bad for Ethiopia as elections approach in May 2010. On the positive side, we are encouraged that the Ethiopian Government (GoE) is moving forward with procuring non-lethal crowd dispersal and riot control supplies and equipment, rather than again relying on lethal force as it did in the late-2005 political violence. Further, it is encouraging that the GoE is finally following-up on a commitment by Prime Minister Meles to then-Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nick Burns in 2005 (reftel) that the GoE would equip police to address future protests. At the same time, however, this procurement suggests that the GoE is at least seeking to avoid being caught unprepared in the event of political violence as we approach national elections.

¶3. (C) At this point, the local media source of this information is not planning on publishing news of this procurement due to a strong fear that the GoE may target him for doing so. Still, he may be looking for more receptive international media outlets which may be willing to run the story. End Comment.

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